Government of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan

School PLUS

AT A GLANCE

School PLUS at a Glance ...

Saskatchewan's children and young people are the heart and future of our province. Their healthy development and success in school and in life are key to the development of a caring and prosperous society. Creating the conditions ... a new social institution ... where *all* children and young people have the opportunity and supports they need to develop to their full potential is both a shared responsibility and a challenge.

School PLUS focuses on the school as the centre of its community and the hub of services and supports for the neighbourhood it serves. It captures overwhelming provincial consensus that the role of school has changed and that schools today have two functions:

1. **to educate children and youth** – nurturing the development of the whole child, intellectually, socially, spiritually, emotionally and physically; and,
2. **to support service delivery** – serving as centres at the community level for the delivery of appropriate social, health, recreation, culture, justice and other services for children and their families.

Working together across the province, the provincial government departments of Community Resources and Employment; Corrections and Public Safety; Culture, Youth and Recreation; Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs; Health; Justice; and Learning are committed to working with provincial partners, Aboriginal organizations, community-based organizations, communities and families to achieve School PLUS.

This brochure provides an overview of the concept of School PLUS, including the vision, goals, guiding principles and key elements. It also describes the three developmental change strategies and program supports needed to sustain the journey. School PLUS will look different in schools and communities across the province because at its core is the flexibility to respond to local conditions and priorities.

The achievement of School PLUS will be a remarkable legacy for Saskatchewan's children and our collective future.

The Task Force on the Role of the School

From 1999-2001, the Task Force on the Role of the School, chaired by Dr. Michael Tymchak, undertook a public dialogue focusing on the changing role of schools. The Task Force recommended a new vision for schools called School PLUS ... dedicated to providing public education in an environment of other human services supports for children and youth.

Human Services include education, health, social, justice, recreation, culture and housing supports and so on that contribute to the well-being of children, youth, adults and families. These supports are provided provincially, regionally and locally by government, as well as municipal, Aboriginal and community agencies and institutions. With School PLUS, these supports are more directly linked to schools.

Creating a New Social Institution in the Image of Saskatchewan's Children and Young People

Creating School[PLUS] requires significant change in the culture, climate, processes, structures and relationships within the provincial education system, across human service sectors, and among family and community members. The purpose is to ensure that all Saskatchewan children and young people have the supports they need for well-being and learning and life success. The journey to School[PLUS] requires the concerted and sustained efforts of families, communities, human services providers and schools working together, over time.

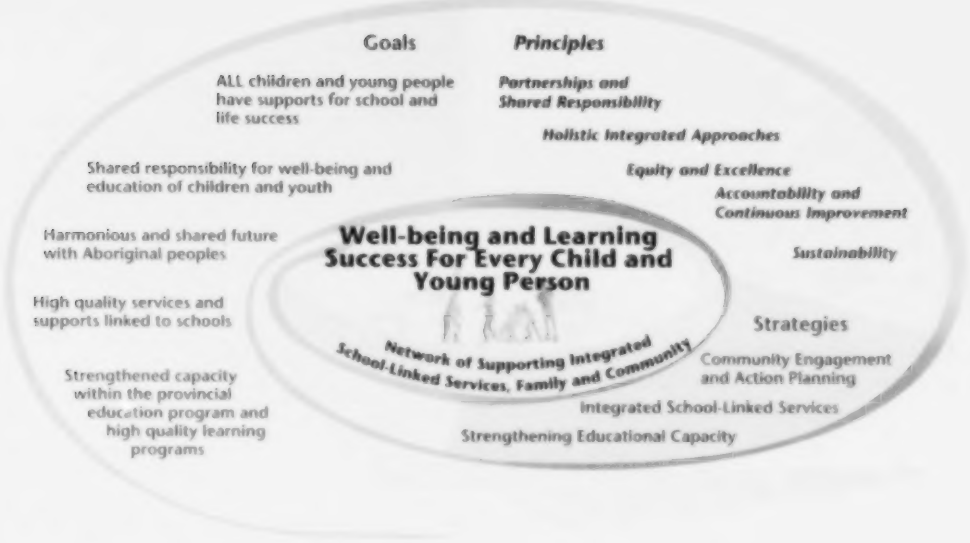
> ...What is required is nothing short of a new social institution in the image of Saskatchewan's children and young people.
>
> Final Report, Task Force on the Role of the School

The foundation for School[PLUS] is in place. The cooperative and collaborative efforts of human service providers, educators and community members across the province have laid a solid base. There are countless examples of highly responsive and innovative interagency and integrated approaches to supporting the development and learning needs of children and young people. As well, Saskatchewan's education system enjoys national and international recognition for excellence and innovation. It is on these two pillars that School[PLUS] can be built.

The Realization of School[PLUS] ... What is different?

- **Schools Have the Capacity to Meet the Developmental and Learning Needs of Every Child and Young Person:** Schools, assisted by a network of human services, provide the supportive environment needed to ensure the success of every child. Rather than requiring students to be school ready, schools are student ready.
- **All Schools are Centres of Community, Open and Welcoming:** Schools actively engage young people, family and community members as partners in program planning and problem solving. School facilities and expertise are key community resources and, in turn, community resources support the well-being and learning needs of children and youth.
- **Human Service Providers Work Within Schools or are Linked to Them:** Schools serve as hubs for delivery of an array of services and supports to achieve learning excellence and well-being.
- **Teachers are Able to Focus on Providing High Quality Learning Opportunities:** Teachers are key to ensuring high quality learning opportunities for children and young people. School[PLUS] acknowledges that for teachers to work at the top of their craft, and for children and youth to focus on learning, they need ready access to services and supports.
- **Government Departments Collaborate More Effectively:** New structures and processes, at provincial, regional and local levels, formalize and systematically advance collaborative planning and integrated school-linked service delivery.
- **Resources are Realigned to Support School[PLUS]:** Barriers are removed to make services more accessible and coordinated. Programs are realigned and linked to schools at the community level.
- **Outcome Measures Inform Continuous Program and Service Improvement:** The increased use of assessment and evaluation information ensures that programs and services are of the highest quality.

School PLUS
Strategic Framework


Goals
Principles
ALL children and young people have supports for school and life success
Partnerships and Shared Responsibility
Holistic Integrated Approaches
Shared responsibility for well-being and education of children and youth
Equity and Excellence
Accountability and Continuous Improvement
Harmonious and shared future with Aboriginal peoples
Well-being and Learning Success For Every Child and Young Person
Sustainability
High quality services and supports linked to schools
Strategies
Network of Supporting Integrated School-Linked Services, Family and Community
Community Engagement and Action Planning
Strengthened capacity within the provincial education program and high quality learning programs
Integrated School-Linked Services
Strengthening Educational Capacity

Goals and Principles For School PLUS

Focused on the vision of well-being and learning success for every child and young person, the transition to School PLUS is guided by the following goals and principles:

School PLUS Goals	Principles to Guide the Transition
For Children, Families and Communities	
1. All Saskatchewan children and young people experience well-being and school and life success	• Partnerships and Shared Responsibility
2. Shared responsibility (among family and community members, human service providers and educators) for the well-being and education of children and youth	
3. A harmonious and shared future with Aboriginal peoples	• Equity and Excellence
For Systems and Services	• Holistic Integrated Approaches
4. High quality services and supports, linked to schools at the community level	• Accountability and Continuous Improvement
5. Strengthened capacity within the provincial education program and high quality learning programs	• Sustainability

Toward School[PLUS] ... Change in Three Areas

To achieve School[PLUS], change is needed in three areas:

- **families and communities** ... to nurture and renew commitment to the healthy development of children and youth;
- **human services systems** ... to effectively link to schools; and,
- ***all* schools** ... to become open, inclusive and able to meet the needs of all children and young people.

Three developmental strategies are in place to guide the change toward School[PLUS]:

- **The Community-Engagement and Action-Planning Strategy** engages communities, families, individuals and human service sectors across the province in:
  - supporting and sharing responsibility for the well-being and education of children and young people;
  - action planning on how best to achieve School[PLUS]; and,
  - information sharing, consensus building and action planning at the provincial, regional and local levels and within each sector of the education and human service systems.
- **The Enhancing Integrated School-Linked Services Strategy** facilitates change across the provincial human service departments and agencies by:
  - vigorously and systematically integrating human services at the community level delivering them either within or linked to schools;
  - resolving systemic and structural issues; and,
  - developing and maintaining the School[PLUS] Community Service Delivery model. The model provides a concrete mechanism close to the community level to bring together community-based partners and other community representation including local health authorities, Community Resources and Employment, Corrections and Public Safety, First Nations and Métis authorities, law enforcement, post-secondary institutions, school divisions, early childhood planning teams and recreation groups to make services more accessible, address service gaps and deliver services that support the well-being and educational success of *every* child and young person.
- **The Strengthening Educational Capacity Strategy** is a comprehensive school improvement process focusing on strengthening the capacity of schools and school divisions as they make the transition to School[PLUS]. It will enable all schools to:
  - be more open and inclusive – adopting the Community Education philosophy and practices, engaging family and community members in close working relationships and sharing responsibility for meeting the learning and development needs of children and youth;
  - provide a comprehensive array of integrated services to meet students' well-being and learning needs;
  - deliver high quality learning opportunities and the highest possible outcomes for all Saskatchewan children and youth;
  - strengthen leadership capabilities within schools and divisions; and,
  - increase assessment capacity and the availability of diagnostic information at the division and school levels to inform continuous program improvement.

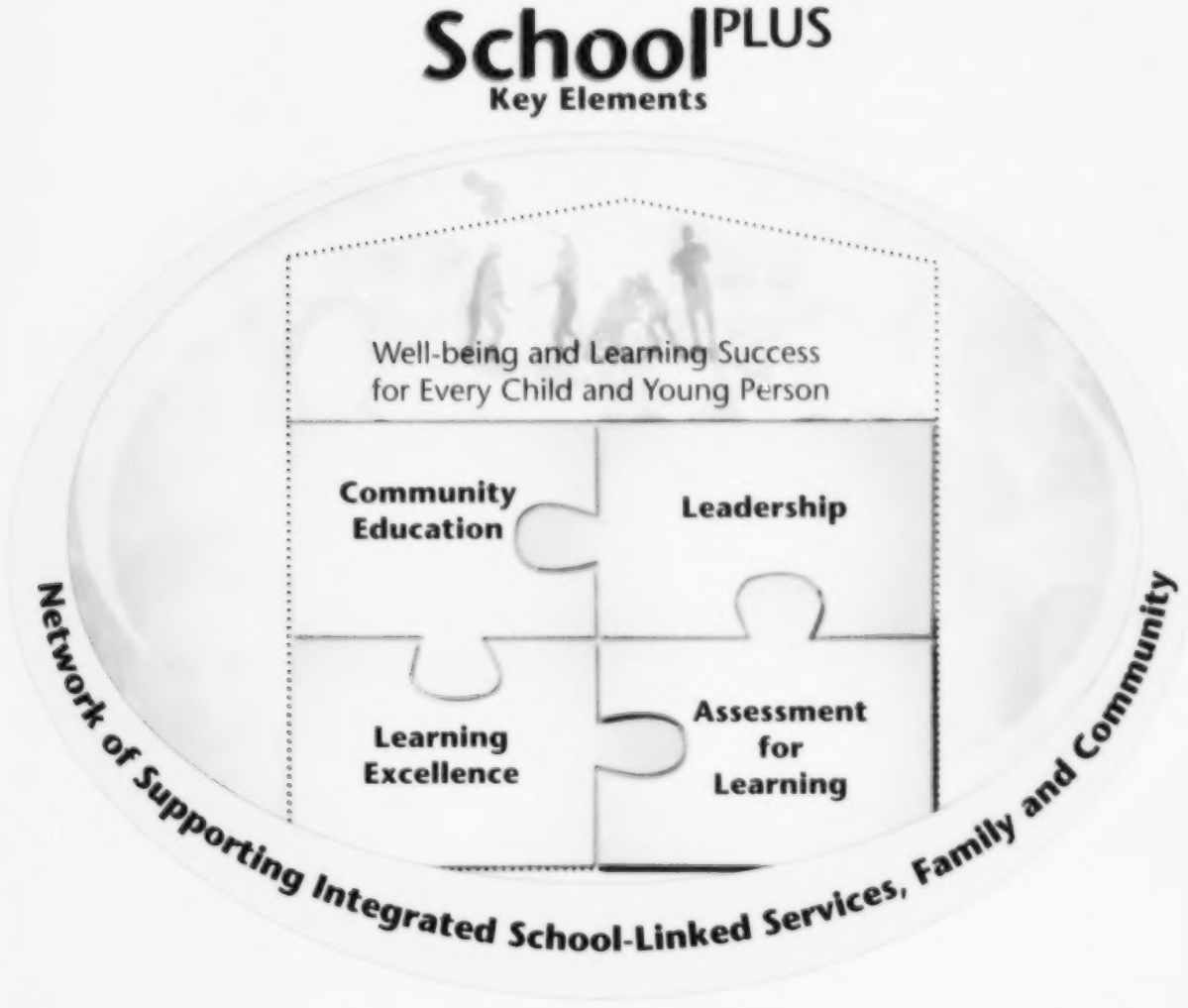
The two programs that support strengthened capacity in the education system are:

- **School and Division Improvement** provides guidelines and funding support to assist schools and school divisions in enhancing practice in key areas such as caring and respectful culture and climate; transactional instruction; assessment for learning; leadership, professional growth and staff support; partnerships; and, prevention and early intervention; and,
- **School[PLUS] Leadership** provides guidelines and funding support to enable schools to lead integrated service initiatives by coordinating and facilitating services for students; provides developmental supports to family and community; and, strengthens the capacity of school leadership teams to carry out inclusive planning, program implementation and monitoring.

School[PLUS] Key Elements

In its final report, the Task Force on the Role of the School recognized that the needs of today's children and youth cannot be met by schools alone. Therefore, it provided a vision for School[PLUS] where the School is dedicated to excellence in education, while working in concert with the *PLUS* – families, communities and human services agencies – to create a new kind of institution dedicated to the needs of children and youth.

The illustration that follows provides five elements that are key to the development of School[PLUS] in every school and community. The first four – Community Education, Leadership, Learning Excellence and Assessment for Learning – are focused on the development of the School in providing excellence in public education and in reaching out to and working in concert with families, its community and with human services agencies. The final element depicts the Network of Supporting Integrated School-Linked Services, Family and Community surrounding the school to provide the *PLUS* in School[PLUS].



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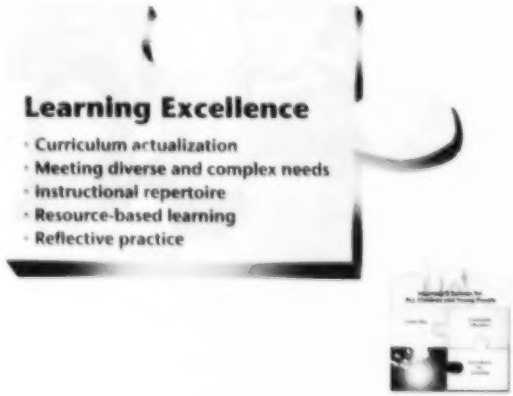
The Key Elements of School^{PLUS} as depicted in the preceding illustration are:

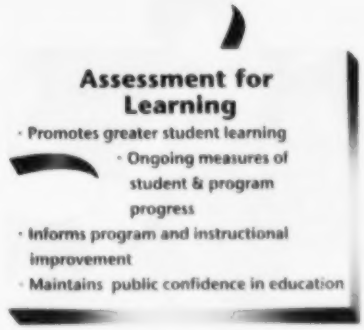
- **Community Education** – School^{PLUS} calls for all schools to adopt Community Education philosophy and practices. This means that schools are centres of the community. Schools:
  - are open and inclusive;
  - are responsive to the unique needs and opportunities of individual communities;
  - nurture understanding and respect among diverse groups;
  - actively engage family and community members;
  - share responsibility and build upon family and community strengths to provide for the education and well-being of children; and,
  - bring together an array of holistic supports for children, youth, families and communities.

- **Leadership** – Leadership development is critical to the success of School^{PLUS}. Every school is a learning community where:
  - leadership is nurtured and shared throughout the school community, including youth, principals, teachers, human service providers, family and community members;
  - staff have opportunities to participate in high quality professional development and reflective practice;
  - leadership teams facilitate processes for planning and continuous improvement.

- **Learning Excellence** – Schools focus on excellence in teaching and learning. With appropriate supports for students and teachers in place, teachers are able to provide high quality learning opportunities and strengthened outcomes for every student. School^{PLUS} includes the full actualization of Saskatchewan's Core Curriculum to meet the diverse needs of all children. Through an array of effective instructional and assessment practices, educators support students in realizing their full potential as successful learners.



- **Assessment for Learning** – Assessment for Learning uses assessment and evaluation information to strengthen the teaching and learning process. It involves ongoing measures of student and program performance to provide the information necessary to ensure that the learning program and instructional approaches promote maximum benefit for every learner. The engagement of staff and the school community in Assessment Learning is vital for the intended goal – improvement in learning and achievement for every student.


Assessment for Learning
· Promotes greater student learning
· Ongoing measures of student & program progress
· Informs program and instructional improvement
· Maintains public confidence in education

- **Network of Supporting Integrated School-Linked Services, Family and Community** – Human service providers, families, community members, schools and school divisions share responsibility for the healthy development and education of children and young people. By working together, human service partners develop the capacity to provide the comprehensive array of supports children and youth need to achieve learning excellence and well-being. There is shared identification of needs, planning, resources, responsibility, service delivery and accountability.

Working Together for Saskatchewan's Children Today and Tomorrow

The framework for School^{PLUS} outlined in this document sets a course for the journey toward School^{PLUS}. The goals, principles, strategies and key elements provided within will guide Saskatchewan's education and human services systems in working together to meet today's challenges and to create tomorrow's opportunities. The journey holds many opportunities – the opportunity for all children and young people to achieve excellence in learning and in life, the opportunity for all communities to share in supporting children and young people as they learn and grow and, finally, the opportunity for every citizen in our province to share in the promise of a prosperous future.

For more information on School[PLUS], please contact:

School[PLUS]

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Government of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan

School PLUS

Spring 2003

Well-being & Educational Success for All Children and Youth

Saskatchewan Council on Children and Youth

The Saskatchewan Council on Children and Youth has been established in response to the Role of the School Task Force recommendations and the Government's commitment to School^{PLUS}.

The Council's mandate is to oversee implementation of the School^{PLUS} vision. It will engage Saskatchewan people in a collaborative planning process to build support for and determine how best to achieve School^{PLUS} in every community.

The Council will engage community leaders as active partners with the Government of Saskatchewan in setting priorities for achieving the wellbeing and learning success of children and youth. It will share responsibility with the Government for the ongoing implementation of the recommendations of the Role of the School Task Force.

Council members are senior representatives from the human services sectors as well as Aboriginal, community and youth leaders.

The role of the school has changed — Schools today have two primary functions:

1. **to educate children and youth** – nurturing the development of the whole child, intellectually, spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically; and,
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The Five "Ws" of School^{PLUS}

What is School^{PLUS}? School^{PLUS} is a term coined by the Task Force on the Role of the School (1999-2000) that describes a new conceptualization of schools as centres of learning, support and community for the children and families they serve. This model builds upon the successful practices of schools and community partners to date and strengthens their capacity for meeting the needs of all children and young people through the creation of a new social institution directly supported by other human services. It more actively involves family and community members, to help provide all children and young people with the supports they need for healthy development and learning success. These supports may include health, nutrition, recreation, culture, social and justice services for children and their families, as well as advanced learning opportunities for adults.

Who will be involved in implementing School^{PLUS}? The healthy development, learning and life success of children depend upon the joint efforts of parents, families, community members and agencies, educators, health providers, social and justice workers, Elders and many others. It takes a whole community to raise a child and to implement School^{PLUS}.

Where and When will School^{PLUS} happen? SchoolPLUS will happen in every school and community across the province. In many schools, the transition to School^{PLUS} is already underway. This movement will continue to grow with the sustained commitment of community and Government over the next few years.

How will School^{PLUS} become a reality? School^{PLUS} will be developed through the participation and sustained support of key organizations and agencies at the community, regional and provincial levels across the province. At the provincial level, there are eight departments of Government that are working together to create School^{PLUS}. These include Corrections and Public Safety; Culture, Youth and Recreation; Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs; Health; Justice; Learning; Northern Affairs; and Social Services. School^{PLUS} will become a reality when Saskatchewan schools have the capacity to meet the learning and developmental needs of every child and young person.

Why do we need School^{PLUS}? The continued wellbeing and prosperity of Saskatchewan depends upon our ability and capacity to develop the full potential of all children and young people. School^{PLUS} represents a new social institution that will provide the supports and services young people need to be successful in school and life. This initiative will enhance the opportunity for all young people to contribute actively to the social and economic future of our province.

What School^{PLUS} means for...

Children and Youth: The School^{PLUS} model provides an environment that supports the success of every child and youth in schools. Children and youth will be supported by a high quality learning program and a network of human services determined by student and community needs, linked to the school.

Families and Communities: As centres of community, School^{PLUS} schools proactively engage youth, family and community members as partners with shared responsibility for goal setting, program planning and problem solving. School facilities, expertise and capacity are a key community resource and, in turn, community resources support the wellbeing and learning needs of all children and young people.

Teachers and Schools: School^{PLUS} is consistent with curriculum, policy and program directions that Saskatchewan educators and other human service providers have been pursuing for many years. School^{PLUS} means students and teachers will get the supports they need. With this support in place, teachers can focus on providing high quality learning opportunities and better outcomes for students in keeping with the vision of Saskatchewan's Core Curriculum.

The changes needed call for the full realization of Core Curriculum and research-based "effective practices", at a consistent and high standard in every school and for every child across the province. School^{PLUS} invites us to imagine the potential and work together towards a shared vision.

All schools will adopt a Community Education philosophy working to become more open, inclusive and able to meet the learning needs of all students. As centres of community, schools will be assisted in establishing or strengthening partnerships with families, community organizations and youth.

Human Service Providers: Efforts at interagency collaboration and integrated services have been underway across Saskatchewan's human service systems for more than a decade. The challenge now is to focus these efforts on the healthy development and learning success of children and youth in schools. New and strengthened relationships among schools and human service providers from the health, social services, justice, recreation, cultural and other sectors will enhance the network of holistic supports for children and young people.

"We share the passion and enthusiasm for a different way of working together."

(Response to the Final Report, Regional Intersectoral Committees, October 2001)

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School^{PLUS} Progress

February 21, 2002

The Government of Saskatchewan announced its commitment to School^{PLUS} and endorsed the vision of the Role of the School Task Force. School^{PLUS} is a major priority for Saskatchewan Learning and for the government as a whole.

Government committed to the following objectives for this year:

1. Establish the structures required to guide the process, including the new Council on Children and Youth; the new Strengthening Educational Capacity Forum (SECF); and the new direction for the Human Services Integration Forum (HSIF);
2. Conduct a province-wide community-engagement and action-planning process led by the Council on Children and Youth;
3. Develop an initiative to strengthen educational capacity led by the SECF;
4. Conclude a province-wide look at justice, social services, health and other services to better meet the needs of children and their families led by HSIF; and,
5. Follow up on each recommendation made by the Role of the School Task Force.

To-date

Progress is already being made toward School^{PLUS} by:

1. Establishing the new Council on Children and Youth; and,
2. Announcing new or expanded funding recognition to the following:

- Strengthening Educational Capacity (School^{PLUS} Implementation) – $33/student, totalling nearly $6 million for 2002;
- More than doubling the number of Community Schools last year and adding five more this year;
- Expanding Community Schools from urban elementary and Northern to secondary, K-12, and rural schools in 2001-02;
- Promoting the Community Education philosophy and life-long learning;
- Expanding Pre-kindergarten Programming – increasing the number of Pre-K spaces by approximately 8%; and,
- Expanding the Technology Factor – an additional $6.2M in funding recognition.

We are Doing Well
(But We Can Do Better)

In December 2001, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD's) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Study released results of its wide-ranging study of student assessment in 32 countries. According to the study, Saskatchewan students are being well prepared for life beyond high school.

But most significantly, student achievement as measured in the study is relatively consistent regardless of socio-economic status. We are doing a good job of bringing a large number of students up to a good level of performance. The challenge is to bring a larger number of students up to the highest levels of performance.

"A key indicator of the wellbeing of a society is how well its children and young people perform in school regardless of their social and economic circumstances. The challenge for a prosperous and caring society is to narrow the gap between low and high performing students while raising the performance of all."

Doug Willms, 2001

Statistics Canada released figures early in 2002 regarding Canadian high school drop out rates. Saskatchewan had the lowest rate – at just over 7%, down from 16% in 1991.

We are keeping Saskatchewan students in school by making the education system an integral part of students' lives and by making education relevant. But more needs to be done.

Teachers can be proud of the nationally and internationally recognized successes of Saskatchewan students. They have an important role in their students' achievements and have the added privilege of witnessing the positive outcomes of efforts in their classrooms.

By providing an environment that is enriched and supportive through School^{PLUS}, Saskatchewan's young people gain the knowledge and skills they need to contribute to their future, the future of our province and the world.

Beginning the Journey Towards School^{PLUS}

Thom Collegiate, Regina
By Ross Brown, Principal

Thom Collegiate's recent designation as a Community School provides an opportunity for us to reach out to all of our students and our community. We have adopted *Learning for All* as our primary goal. Our staff also recognizes the need for schools to serve as a centre of the community, providing our students and their families access to social, health, recreational and cultural services.

This year we are implementing a variety of Community School initiatives that we hope will bring us closer to our students and our community. We have begun a survey of students to identify their needs and the support they require. We have formed a Community Council that will guide our efforts in both education and program delivery. We are searching for a Community Co-ordinator to be our liaison, our inspiration, our conscience and our guide. We are examining our structure, our timetable and our method of operation. We are asking questions and debating. We are searching for the subtle balance between teaching and learning. We want to encourage inclusion and to engage our students. We recognize the need for research, caution and common sense.

Designation as a Community School is an exciting opportunity for Thom Collegiate. We are at the beginning of a wonderful journey that will lead us to places we have never been. Along the way we hope to help more students, include more families, reflect our community and encourage a zest for learning that will continue in our students throughout their lives.

Elders in Schools

By Ted Amendt, Saskatchewan Learning

An Elder walks into this Saskatoon school at 8:45 a.m. just as she does every morning. She comes with her grandchildren and says Tanisi (Hello). She is welcomed with a hug or a handshake by staff and students who try to reply Namōyananito, Kīya Māka (I'm fine. How about you?). As she meets children in the halls, they all call her Kohkum (grandmother) or Nohkum (my grandmother). She refers to the staff, students and community members as her grandchildren and always makes time for all of them. She is there when staff, students or community members are experiencing hard times and is willing to listen to them, smudge and pray for them and most importantly, to make them smile.

Her sense of humour is unmatched and laughter abounds when she is in the room.

She is always welcome in classrooms, as there is no Elder time. The classroom door is always open and the teacher sees her as a respected person with a wealth of knowledge, not as a senior who tells stories, occupying important instruction time. She helps all to learn some Cree, creates a welcoming atmosphere, helps with some discipline in a grandmotherly way and visits every classroom at least twice a day. She is respected, honoured and loved by the community. She is changing the way this school understands the term Aboriginal education or cultural inclusion. She is helping students feel a sense of pride in who they are and feel at home in their school. This grandma is well loved.

Creating an Environment
Where Anything Can Happen

By Ted Amendt, Saskatchewan Learning

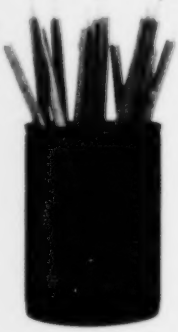
As the former Community School Coordinator for Princess Alexandra Community School in Saskatoon, I believe that this school has a goal to create an environment where anything can happen. So far, they've been very successful.

In October 2001, the school held an Elders' Gathering. The gathering brought together 22 Elders and 200 school and community members for a day and a half to discuss how to work together, and how best to help the students. This gathering set the school on the right path, as Elders shared stories and gave advice on the best ways to work with students. This event provided a yardstick for all staff throughout the year as they measured what they were doing against what they had learned from the Elders.

Princess Alexandra Community School has also been working with community and families in a unique way. The school is a place of learning and the doors have been opened for adults in the community to get their education in the comfort and safety of their own Community School. Through a partnership between both school divisions, adult education opportunities for the entire spectrum of learning (literacy, Adult 10 and 12, GED and post-secondary education) are being offered to community members. In response to a need to help adult learners connect with employment after their education, two employment coordinators are now working out of Princess Alexandra Community School to assist community members in securing employment or workplace experiences.

Princess Alexandra Community School has worked with staff, students, parents, community members and Elders to come up with four school beliefs. These beliefs are safety, self-esteem, connectedness and respect. Everything that is done in the school must harmonize with these beliefs and they are used to guide the entire school community. Developing these beliefs in a community development process and putting these beliefs into practice has led to some exciting ways of working together. For instance, last year the school decided that every child in grade one would be able to read by the end of the year. As this was not the case in the past, extra attention was directed to this effort. By working towards this belief, the school could say by the end of the school year that every child in grade one was able to read!

The school has also worked to change staff meetings to school meetings. This is not merely a change in semantics, but rather, a change in the way the school and its families and community work together. By having school meetings, every parent, student, staff and community member has an equal say in what happens at the school and true community development can happen. By working together as an entire community in a respectful way, this school community truly believes that anything can happen.



Connections and Perceptions

Culture, Youth and Recreation Saskatchewan Culture, Youth and Recreation's (CYR) work is strongly linked to the School^{PLUS} philosophy. Programs such as the Saskatoon District Health's *In Motion* fitness program targets the potential schools offer. An *In Motion* school is one that provides physical activity opportunities for all students. The goal is to strive towards 30 minutes of activity for each child every day. Physical inactivity is linked directly to the increased prevalence of childhood obesity – for this reason, *In Motion* targets children and youth throughout the school system. – Winter Fedyk, Culture, Youth and Recreation

Primary Health Care Primary health care will link with School^{PLUS} in the areas of health promotion, prevention of illness and injury and in the management of chronic diseases. For example, youth injury prevention regarding bicycle safety could involve the schools, RCMP, public health and primary health care nurses and the community at large to look at safety helmets and their use, organizing family bicycle outings and working with the RCMP at bike rodeos. There is immense potential to cooperate and collaborate between Primary Health Care initiatives and School^{PLUS}. – Gill White, Health

Social Services We know that some Saskatchewan children right now are not acquiring the education and associated skills that they need to achieve good outcomes as adults. School^{PLUS} brings a new perspective to the challenge of assuring that all children are safe and supported in their families and that every child is prepared for a good future as a citizen of the province. – Rick August, Social Services

Human Services Integration Forum School^{PLUS} holds great promise but the work ahead is challenging and complex. We need to make a long-term commitment to creating communities and schools that will meet the wellbeing and learning needs of all. The Government Response document, *Securing Saskatchewan's Future*, identifies the need for a systematic and vigorous strategy to advance integrated human services. In 2002, the Human Services Integration Forum has made School^{PLUS} a key priority. – Bill Werry, Human Services Integration Forum

Justice Saskatchewan Justice supports School^{PLUS} and the opportunities provided for improvement to the wellbeing of children and families. Saskatchewan Justice will link with School^{PLUS} on a variety of programs, including crime prevention, victims' services, family law services, community policing, Aboriginal court worker program and community justice. The Family Justice Services Branch assists parents and their children with separation and divorce. Parent education, custody and access assessments, enforcement of child and spousal support and provisions of information and assistance for resolving disputes, build resilient families and children prepared to engage in a bright future. – Betty Ann Pottruff, Saskatchewan Justice

Understanding School^{PLUS}

School^{PLUS} will look different in different communities, reflecting the unique needs and interests of the children and families in the area.

There are two major components to the School^{PLUS} model:

- the New School – where every school adopts the Community Education philosophy and practices and is a learning community; and,
- a network of Integrated School-Linked Services.

There are five key characteristics of the new school within School^{PLUS}:

1. **Community Education Philosophy and Practices** – Schools are open and inclusive, actively engaging family members and establishing partnerships with community groups and individuals in support of the wellbeing and education of children and young people.

Community Education is a philosophy that embraces the beliefs that:

- everyone in the community – individuals, families, business, public and private agencies – share responsibility for the education of all;
- schools have a major role to play in nurturing shared understanding and respect among diverse groups and interests, and in fostering community;
- education is a lifelong process;
- citizens have a responsibility and a right to be involved in determining community needs, identifying community resources and linking those needs and resources to improve their community; and,
- a vibrant and caring society requires citizens to be actively involved in the affairs of their communities (*Building Communities of Hope*. Saskatchewan Education, 1994).

2. **Leadership** – Leadership is nurtured throughout the school community, including youth, principals, teachers, human service providers, family and community members. Leadership development is critical to the success of School^{PLUS}.
3. **Learning Program** – School^{PLUS} requires full actualization of all elements of Saskatchewan's Core Curriculum to meet the diverse and complex needs of children and youth. Through an array of effective instructional and assessment practices and supportive partnerships with community members and agencies, educators can assist students to realize their full potential as successful learners.
4. **Assessment for Learning** – Ongoing, authentic measures of student and program progress inform teachers and students and ensure that students are appropriately supported in their learning.
5. **Integrated School-Linked Services** – Collaborative processes are used to forge partnerships and link needed supports and services to the school.

Core Curriculum

Since the mid-1980s, Saskatchewan Learning and its educational partners, in particular teachers, have been expending considerable effort in the design and implementation of new curricula and support programs. Saskatchewan's Core Curriculum reform is recognized by educational stakeholders and various jurisdictions to be of high quality. It is through the concerted efforts of teachers, administrators, and others that the vision of Core Curriculum is becoming a reality in Saskatchewan classrooms. Strengthening our educational capacity to narrow the gap between high and low achievers, while raising the overall level of learning, is one of the key thrusts of the School^{PLUS} initiative. Teachers' efforts make Core Curriculum a reality. They will be supported in their efforts to address the learning needs of each student and to ensure the success of each learner.

School^{PLUS} Goals

For Children, Families and Communities:

1. All Saskatchewan children and young people have access to the supports they need for school and life success.
2. Shared responsibility for the wellbeing and education of children and youth.
3. A harmonious and shared future with Aboriginal peoples.

For Systems and Services:

4. High quality, comprehensive and integrated services and supports, linked to schools at the community level.
5. Strengthened capacity within the provincial education system to deliver high quality learning programs.

Understanding the Role of the School

Making School^{PLUS} Youth and Community Friendly

Submitted by the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement

What does School^{PLUS} mean to us and other youth? It's about giving schools to young people and their communities. It's about learning how to create our environment instead of reacting to it. The bottom line is that we need to look for healthy ways to support young people, so they can be healthy and grow into supportive adults. One of the biggest lessons we've learned in our work is the importance of the process and of giving due respect to all stakeholders. Without this, the success of any community undertaking is threatened.

Youth Facilitation Training (YFT) alumnus, Virginia Beebe, gave an awesome keynote speech at the Spring Forum. The audience was captivated by her honesty about her situation as a single, teen parent, and her ability to recognize how the support she received at Saskatoon's Nutana Collegiate impacted the course of her life:

"The philosophy of School^{PLUS} changed my life and broke an unhealthy life cycle, that cycle being poverty and continual bad decision making. First, I was given my feet, [then they gave me] my voice by not judging me. Then I was taught how to walk. [They showed me that] all the programs and opportunities for educating myself are at my fingertips. Now I'm cheered on while I run. I truly believe in the philosophy of helping one another in community co-operation. I am not becoming the change. "I am the change. I am School^{PLUS}."

This school year we are committed, with much enthusiasm, to continuing to educate our communities about a change that has been inside all of us for a long time.

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Photos courtesy of Balcarres Community School and Saskatchewan Learning